

Small Group Curriculum • Genesis 1 • Foundations

EMBODIED IMAGE BEARER • WEEK 5 • Genesis 1:26-28

The Word of God wastes no time in setting the foundation of what it means to be human. Found in the very first chapter of Genesis, in the unfolding of the creation story, God reveals humanity's divine design as being **embodied image bearers of Himself**. Therefore, it would be to the glory and praise of God and to our great benefit that we establish this Truth to build upon all the ways that we think about, understand, and live out our embodied nature, the physicality of our being.

REMINDERS

- Is anyone in your group ready to become an official member of Awakening Church? Encourage them to join Awakening 201 this March [here](#).
- Our café team is in need of volunteers. Would you be willing to serve once a month to offer care and hospitality to our guests and church family? Email bailey@awakeningchurch.com for more information.

Past Session Check-In:

- Take a moment and review the application from your last discussion. Ask the group where they were challenged, if they made any commitment for change and/or action, and if they followed through with their decision.

ICEBREAKER

Let's warm-up our minds around the concept of embodiment. If God were a superhero, who would He be? Share with the group a quality of God your chosen superhero embodies.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of our humanity and physicality begins with the narration in Genesis 1.

As a group, read together, Genesis 1:27, *"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

Clear yet mysterious in nature, we are informed (three times repeated!) that we are created in the image and likeness of God. **Imago Dei** is fundamental and intrinsic to our being. Further deepening and elevating the purpose of man's existence, we see that our divine design is followed by divine blessing and stewardship.

IMAGO DEI EXERCISE

For this next segment, put on your "Imago Dei lens" as you think about yourself. Let your "embodied image bearer of God" nature be at the forefront of your mind. Take 2-3 minutes to self-reflect and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what qualities of God

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you embody. (For now, it is best to put modesty aside. Lean toward boldness and confidence to get to the heart of this exercise.)

After self-reflection, introduce yourself to the group using Imago Dei language. For example, “I am Eliza and I’m Imago Dei. I embody God’s creativity and attentiveness to details, not just in my vocation as an architect, but also in the little things of my day to day.”

REFLECTION and DISCUSSION

1. What was it like to use and hear Imago Dei language? How is it different from how we typically think and talk about ourselves?
2. What did you learn about God and His embodiment through man?
3. How did the exercise help (re)shape your perspective on physical and tangible experiences of God?
4. How does an Imago Dei lens help make blessings and fruitfulness more “visible” to you?

TRANSITION

Genesis is (obviously) just the beginning. Within the biblical narrative (and within our own lives), we see how man’s embodied nature is marred by sin. The consequences are vast and wide. We find ourselves in a swirl of misguided pursuits, confusion, and an incredibly frail sense of dignity toward our embodied being. We experience bodily brokenness and ultimately, death.

QUESTION: Where do you see the brokenness of humanity within the world and within yourself? How has it marred the imago dei?

So now what?

Enter Jesus. The perfect embodiment of the Father. Word made flesh and dwelt among us. In “His fully God and fully Man form”, Jesus fulfills the plan and promise of redemption, resurrection, and renewal for humanity.

DISCUSSION

READ Colossians 1:15-20 and Philippians 2:6-8

1. What are you learning about Jesus’ embodiment as articulated in these verses?
2. How does the knowledge and understanding of Jesus’ embodiment renew your mind about your own being or physicality?
3. Bodily resurrection and eternal embodiment have always been the vision for humanity. How can you participate in this divine vision here and now? (You may also try to think within the law of love... “Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself.”).
 - a. BONUS QUESTIONS (Phil 2):

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- i. What does it mean that Jesus was “in very nature God” and “made himself nothing”?
- ii. What does humility like this look like in our world today?
- iii. What is one area God is asking me to strip away my pride and die to self in?

RESPONSE and PRAYER

Set aside time for prayer at the end of your group gathering. Use the prayer prompts below.

awe and wonder
gratitude
renewing of the mind

TAKING IT FURTHER, LEARN FROM JESUS

In your own time, read any one of the gospels and take note of all the ways that Jesus (perfectly) lived out His embodied nature. Share notes with a family member, friend, or within your small group. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal practically how you can live in alignment with the ways of Jesus.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR GROUP TO CONSIDER

Check out our outreach page at <https://awakeningchurch.com/outreach/> to explore ways your group can volunteer at our biweekly food pantry, support Foster the City, or join the City Team movement.

VERSUS

Philippians 2:5-11

- ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
- ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
- ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
- ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
- ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,



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¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.